

CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS *Wt*

10 April 1959

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DECLASSIFIED BY:
JCS DECLASSIFICATION BRANCH

Dear Nate:

DATE - *13 Jan 1982*

After I got back this afternoon I found that some of our Intelligence people had developed some information in connection with the Berlin situation which suggests another non-military measure which may be worth considering and which I have not yet heard mentioned.

It has been reported that over half of the Soviet ocean commerce is carried in foreign bottoms. Over eleven hundred foreign flag ships, with a total tonnage of over four and one half million, are under charter to the Soviets. Of this number of ships, about 58% fly the flag of NATO nations. If the Soviets are deprived of NATO flag tonnage, the only remaining reservoir of shipping which can even approach filling their requirements are American flag ships and American owned "Flags of Convenience" ships.

I realize that it would be very difficult to convince the NATO nations that they should put pressure on their ship-owners to refuse to enter into charter parties with the Soviets. Perhaps the United States might have to underwrite some of their losses. I do feel that this is a plan well worth investigating despite the obvious difficulties in its execution. In contrast to reprisal at sea which involves a threat or actual use of force this proposed measure is notable by the absence of that factor. While the political impact might not be as great it could produce a similar result. In reference to the proposed embargo measure it is possible that cancellation of charters might serve to disrupt Soviet economics to a greater degree. It would certainly be less complicated than embargo because much fewer Western countries would be involved.

Bob Murphy has the same information. Sorry that we didn't get this idea sooner.

Sincerely,

Arleigh

ARLEIGH BURKE

General N. F. Twining, USAF
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

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